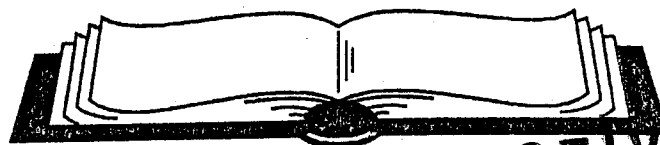


NEW JERSEY

2000-2001
Guidelines and
Application**BEST
PRACTICES****RECEIVED**
NOV 27 2000
HUDSON COUNTY
Supt. of School**Deadline for Application to County Office:**
NOVEMBER 27, 2000

The Best Practices application is a public document. The information that you provide will serve as the official record. Review the application prior to submission to ensure accuracy and adherence to the guidelines. Type or keyboard information requested on this page and page 2, if applicable.

Category	<u>Educational Support/Guidance</u>	(Application is limited to one category. See page 3 for details.)
Practice Name	<u>Focus on Success Program</u>	
Number of Schools with Practice	<u>2</u>	(If more than one school or district, read and complete information on page 2.)

County	<u>Hudson</u>		
District (Proper Name)	<u>Union City</u>		
Address	<u>3912 Bergen Turnpike</u>		
	Street/P. O. Box	<u>Union City</u>	<u>07087</u>
	City		Zip Code
Telephone	<u>201-348-5881</u>	Fax <u>201-864-2262</u>	Email
Chief School Administrator	<u>Thomas Highton</u>	<u>thighton@union-city.k12.nj.us</u>	
Nominated School #1 (Proper Name)	<u>Emerson High School</u>		
Address	<u>318-18th Street</u>		
	Street/P. O. Box	<u>Union City</u>	<u>07087</u>
	City		Zip Code
Telephone	<u>201-348-2718</u>	Fax <u>201-864-2262</u>	Email
Principal	<u>Frank Scarafile</u>	<u>fscarafile@union-city.k12.nj.us</u>	
Program Developer(s)	<u>Annette Kaplan, Karen Bilbao, Agnes Colaneri</u>		
Application Prepared By	<u>Agnes Colaneri</u>		
Chief School Administrator's or Charter School Lead Person's Signature			

FOR USE BY COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS ONLYApproved: ☒ Yes ☐ No County Superintendent's Signature

NEW JERSEY BEST PRACTICES 2000-2001 GUIDELINES

The New Jersey State Department of Education has created a program of awards and recognition that will identify and catalog New Jersey BEST PRACTICES. The purpose of this program is to recognize and celebrate the excellence achieved by New Jersey's public schools and to make information describing designated BEST PRACTICES readily accessible to educators throughout the state. Information describing New Jersey BEST PRACTICES is available to all schools and the public through the department's web site at <http://www.state.nj.us/education>, Office of Innovative Programs and Practices.

BEST PRACTICES are those innovative strategies that (1) promote high student achievement; (2) address specific educational needs of students and the *Core Curriculum Content Standards including the Cross-Content Workplace Readiness Standards*; (3) yield documented results meeting set objectives, and (4) can be replicated. BEST PRACTICES are designated in 19 categories including subject area disciplines and support areas contributing to high student achievement and a positive school environment. A list of the categories is found on page 4 of the Guidelines and Application.

Eligibility: Any New Jersey school district or charter school is eligible to participate. The competition is open to public schools serving students in pre-kindergarten to grade 12. The practice must have been in place for a minimum of one year prior to submission. Only one application per category per school may be submitted. An application cannot be submitted for a BEST PRACTICE that has been previously recognized. Commercially developed practices will not be considered. There is no limit to the number of schools with practices that a district may propose for consideration.

Selection Process: There are five phases to the selection process for BEST PRACTICES which culminate in a Recognition Ceremony on June 7, 2001.

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| (1) | November | The county superintendents of schools assure that all applicants do not evidence any violations of code, statute or department policy. |
| (2) | February | Panels of New Jersey educators identified by their chief school administrators and, in some instances, experts from other professions are convened to read and evaluate all eligible applications to determine the semifinalists. |
| (3) | March | Panelists meet in a second round to read and evaluate the semifinalist applications to determine the finalists. |
| (4) | April | Finalist applications are verified for compliance by the county superintendents of schools. |
| (5) | April/May | Finalists receive site visits to supplement and confirm the information written in the applications. Fifty BEST PRACTICES are named and notified. |

Criteria for Evaluation of Applications		Maximum Points
<i>If you fail to comply with the technical requirements, your application will be eliminated.</i>		
1.	The practice has identified objectives, is innovative, promotes high student achievement, and can be replicated.	40 points
2.	The practice addresses the <i>Core Curriculum Content Standards including the Cross-Content Workplace Readiness Standards</i> .	25 points
3.	The practice has documented assessment measures for meeting its objectives and student educational needs.	35 points

Recognition: Banners, pins and certificates will be presented at the June 7, 2001 statewide ceremony with additional recognition generated through the media. Each BEST PRACTICE will receive a \$500 award check for expansion of the current specialization or for replication of the specialization in another school.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, CONTACT:
 Rochelle Hendricks, Coordinator, Best Practices/Star Schools Program
 Office of Innovative Programs and Practices, Division of Academic and Career Standards
 New Jersey Department of Education
 PO Box 500, Trenton, NJ 08625-0500
 Telephone (609) 777-0800 or Fax (609) 292-3142

1. DESCRIBE THE PRACTICE PROPOSED FOR RECOGNITION, AND LIST ITS OBJECTIVES. DETAIL HOW THE PRACTICE IS INNOVATIVE AND HOW IT PROMOTES HIGH STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT.

The Focus on Success Program in this district is designed to be a "school within a school" program which focuses intensive resources to help students build their basic literacy skills.

Prior to entering high school, students are asked to attend an eighteen-day summer enrichment program that concentrates on reading, writing, science, and math skills. Students keep portfolios in these subjects, and, because the enrichment program carries no credit, all portfolio work is acceptable for inclusion in students' ninth-grade portfolios.

Once students enter the ninth grade, this "school within a school" provides specific reading instruction based on assessed reading ability taught through an integrated whole language curriculum. Students take English for Today 1, an intensive course designed specifically for developmental students. English classes meet five days a week for eighty-minute periods, for which students receive ten credits upon course completion. Students meet their other ninth-grade requirements by taking Selected Topics or Biology, Math 1 or Algebra 1, World History, and Physical Education and Health. Though class size is restricted to not more than twenty students, Language Arts classes are usually limited to sixteen students, to give teachers the opportunity to know the individual talents of their students and to help move each student to a higher level of literacy. Team-teaching, cooperative learning, and collaborative planning are integral to the program. Students are mentored by Focus teachers in a daily mentoring session to help them learn how to be effective in their daily lives. Electives are built into each student's daily schedule. Individual tutoring with a reading specialist is given to those students who have severe reading problems. One guidance counselor is assigned specifically to work with Focus students, and counseling for personal problems is provided on-site through the district's School Base Program. A program coordinator is responsible for home contact and liaisons with faculty and administration, as well as outside agencies, such as the Division of Youth and Family Services, when necessary. The coordinator also monitors attendance and tracks academic progress in all subject areas for each student in the program, and conferences on a regular basis with staff and students to facilitate student progress.

The objectives of the program are:

1. To raise literacy standards for each student in the program;
2. To develop each student's writing skills;
3. To develop critical thinking skills that will not only enhance learning but also to enable students to make wise choices concerning their learning and their lives;
4. To provide a strong support system for struggling learners;
5. To provide necessary counseling services which will help students cope with non-academic problems that interfere with learning;
6. To keep at-risk students in school.

The practice is innovative because it is comprehensive in its approach to helping an at-risk population succeed in high school. Teachers in the program have been specifically trained in various reading techniques, such as Phonographics and/or the basic Wilson Reading System, and in the practical application of Multiple Intelligences theory, cooperative learning, team-teaching, and inclusion. Counseling is available on site on a daily basis for students with critical personal problems. Students are monitored daily and a strong home-school liaison is maintained. Focus on Success also provides a clear transition program for elementary school students in at-risk programs, such as those in Alternative Education. The program is also aligned with the school's Whole School Reform model, Coalition for Essential Schools.

The practice promotes high student achievement by using trained and highly dedicated teachers to work with a student population whose needs are clearly identified. An extensive support

program is in place so that students have help in dealing not only with academic needs but also with behavioral and socialization problems that may interfere with academic success.

2. LIST THE SPECIFIC CORE CURRICULUM CONTENT STANDARDS, INCLUDING THE CROSS-CONTENT WORKPLACE READINESS STANDARDS, ADDRESSED BY THE PRACTICE AND DESCRIBE HOW THE PRACTICE ADDRESSES THOSE STANDARDS. PROVIDE AN EXAMPLE TO SUBSTANTIATE YOUR RESPONSE.

The following Language Arts Literacy Standards are addressed throughout the program.

ALL STUDENTS WILL SPEAK FOR A VARIETY OF REAL PURPOSES AND AUDIENCES.

Throughout the year, students did oral book reports and gave speeches on controversial issues, as well as oral presentations on ancient cultures to faculty, administration, and other students. This presentation, which celebrated the contributions of ancient cultures to the modern world, was cross-curricular, and involved projects in mythology, ancient sciences, the origins of mathematics, and the making of masks.

ALL STUDENTS WILL LISTEN ACTIVELY IN A VARIETY OF SITUATIONS TO INFORMATION FROM A VARIETY OF SOURCES.

Students listened to speeches prepared by classmates on current controversial issues, and participated in question-and-answer sessions. In addition, students attended assemblies and evaluated guest presentations given by actors, by business people on Career Day, and by inmates from a Scared Straight program sponsored by the State Corrections Department.

ALL STUDENTS WILL WRITE IN CLEAR, CONCISE, ORGANIZED LANGUAGE THAT VARIES IN CONTENT AND FORM FOR DIFFERENT AUDIENCES AND PURPOSES.

Students wrote essays, book reports, and speeches for English for Today 1. Students also wrote cross-curricular research papers in English for Today 1 and World History, and wrote science reports for Selected Topics and Biology. In addition, students wrote business letters in response to writing prompts for practice for the Early Warning Test. Students also completed data sheets for the Focus Program.

ALL STUDENTS WILL READ VARIOUS MATERIALS AND TEXTS WITH COMPREHENSION AND CRITICAL ANALYSIS.

In all English for Today 1 classes, students were required to read and analyze core books on their reading levels, such as Greek mythology, *Great Expectations*, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, and *Out of the Dust*, a novel told in free verse. Students also read novels in reading circles, and did independent reading for book reports. This variety in reading materials was supported throughout the Focus program with supplemental books, newspapers, magazines, and Internet articles required for research in their English, history, math, science, and health classes.

ALL STUDENTS WILL VIEW, UNDERSTAND, AND USE NONTEXTUAL VISUAL INFORMATION.

In addition to analyzing visual data when using the Internet for research, reading maps, charts, graphs, and illustrations was a cross-curricular, daily experience. Textbooks and supplementary materials required students to read and interpret nontextual information as they studied history, and analyzed data in science, math and health classes.

The following Cross-Content Workplace Readiness Standards are addressed through this program.

ALL STUDENTS WILL DEVELOP CAREER PLANNING AND WORKPLACE READINESS SKILLS.

Career interests were discussed in mentoring, Guidance, and personal counseling sessions, and career interest inventories were completed prior to filling out schedules for tenth grade. Throughout the year, emphasis was placed on good attendance, being on time for class, effective use of time on task, appropriate dress and behavior in mentoring sessions and in content classes. Students also learned the importance of team planning through cooperative learning projects. Students had to complete career interest inventories before they planned their tenth-grade schedules, and students applying for summer jobs also filled out working papers.

ALL STUDENTS WILL USE TECHNOLOGY, INFORMATION, AND OTHER SKILLS

There was a heavy integration of technology in Focus classes. Students used the Internet for research across the curriculum, and prepared literature-based technology projects, including newspapers and Power Point presentations based on novels. Computers were used for writing and editing compositions, speeches, and reports, often on a daily basis, and for writing cross-curricular research papers.

ALL STUDENTS WILL USE CRITICAL THINKING, DECISION-MAKING, AND PROBLEM-SOLVING SKILLS.

The Seven Habits of Highly Effective Teens, by Sean Covey, was used as the primary source for developing these skills during mentoring sessions. In addition, students engaged in role-playing and in writing responses to scenarios relevant to their life-experiences. These skills were also a critical component of each student's individual counseling sessions.

ALL STUDENTS WILL DEMONSTRATE SELF-MANAGEMENT SKILLS.

All students were given time frames for all of their assignments, and agenda books in which they had to write their assignments and the dates on which assignments were due. Students were expected to create their own schedules to help them complete their work in a timely fashion. In cooperative learning groups, each member was responsible for completing his own section of the final group product on time.

ALL STUDENTS WILL APPLY SAFETY PRINCIPLES.

All students were taught to follow guidelines regarding the use of computers, printers, and copy machines. In addition, safe use of equipment was an integral part of science experiments.

3. DESCRIBE THE EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF THE STUDENTS THAT THE PRACTICE ADDRESSES. DOCUMENT THE ASSESSMENT MEASURES USED TO DETERMINE THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE OBJECTIVES OF THE PRACTICE HAVE BEEN MET. PROVIDE ASSESSMENTS AND DATA TO SHOW HOW THE PRACTICE MET THOSE NEEDS.

The educational needs of students in the program are:

1. improved literacy , specifically in the areas of word attack skills, critical thinking skills and literal and inferential comprehension;
2. improved writing skills, especially in the areas of organization, focus, clarity of presentation, and grammar;
3. improved attendance;
4. improved socialization and behavioral skills.

The following assessment measures were used to determine the extent to which the objectives of the practice have been met.

1. Woodcock-Johnson Tests of Achievement
 - Pretests given in June 1999 showed that 85% of incoming students had a passage comprehension below seventh-grade reading level.
 - Students who were post-tested showed gains ranging from one to six grade levels in Letter-Word Recognition, Word Attack Skills, and Passage Comprehension.
2. Attendance
 - The average rate for attendance for Focus students was over 90% for all four marking periods.
 - A steady enrollment was maintained so that 85% of the original students who entered the program in September remained.
3. Behavior
 - Serious problems were confined to less than 10% of the population.
 - Many students have become active in the total school program, serving on Student Council, joining clubs, and participating in different sports programs.
4. Final Passing Rates
 - Passing rates in core subjects (English, Math, World History, and Science) were 70% or better on final exams.
 - Passing rates in core subjects (English, Math, World History, and Science) were 80% or better for the year.

4. DESCRIBE HOW YOU WOULD REPLICATE THE PRACTICE IN ANOTHER SCHOOL/DISTRICT.

The program can be replicated in any secondary setting. Our program was designed and implemented over a two-month period. Because the program is multi-faceted, the decision to implement the program should ideally be made one school year prior to implementation so that all necessary components are in place. A team consisting of the school principal, supervisor and/or coordinator, and teachers trained in administering informal reading inventories must liaison with the sending elementary schools to identify and test all students recommended for the program, and to contact parents regarding their child's placement in the program. It is also necessary to recruit and train interested teachers, and to work out scheduling for all teachers/courses. It would also allow visitations by interested schools to schools that have implemented this program.